

The Civil Rights Movement: “Lynching”



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Mr. Bruce's 6th Hour History

Throughout history, we, as people of America, have experienced numerous events that have altered the outcome of our present day civilization. Thankfully, most of our more morbid history has been eliminated. For example, slavery, the American Revolution, the Civil War, and racism has dropped drastically. Looking back in history, during the Civil Rights Movement, racism and slavery were still strong in much of the Southern United States and even an uncomfortable percentage in the Northern portion of the United States. As a result of slavery and racism, violence was often a result. The dirty deed was carried out in many different ways, but one method, in particular, strikes my interest especially; lynching.

Lynching is a method of killing an accused person without a legal trial. More often than not, the victims of such a macabre demonstration were African Americans. There were many alleged crimes committed, leaving opportunity open quite frequently for lynching to occur, especially since the black portion of our civilization were under privileged and were not appreciated as a full human being. This made it easier to get away with such activities. The most popular lynching technique was hangings. This would most often be done in the middle of the night when not very many people were around to witness the screams for help or sight of someone getting hung. There were some cases when the victim would be burned as well. Since one person was no strong enough to hang a person or burn them alone, mobs would form and turn a murder into a lynch. Sometimes, an entire family would be lynched. In these cases, a mob was most useful.

It didn't matter your place in society either; if your were a black person and you were accused of a crime, chances are, you would have a mob looking for you and more

than likely, they would be successful in murder. In some cases, you didn't even have to be accused of a crime. In fact, if you were any kind of activist, black or white, against slavery or segregation, you were at risk of lynching. Rita Schwerner and her husband were white activists, dedicated to stopping segregation. Many were in disagreement of this, so to make their opinion known, they lynched her husband and she was constantly harassed. Unfortunately, nobody could prove it fact that he was lynched until sometime later and by then, it was too late to take action.

Like many other social turmoils, lynching was just one more problem the civil Rights Movement was aimed toward stopping. Although we have not completely abolished mob murders, it is required that the person or persons responsible be taken into custody, thus preventing problems like we had during the forming of the Civil Rights Movement.